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VOL. 13, NO. 2 December 2011

CONTENTS

Information about the New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies v

Articles

'Gentlemen both on and off the Field': The 1924 Chinese Universities
Soccer Team in New Zealand
GEOFF WATSON 1

White People Can't Sell Sushi: Unpacking Korean Influence over
Sushi Production in New Zealand
MATTHEW ALLEN and RUMI SAKAMOTO 18

To Sing for the Nation: Japan, School Song and the Forging of a New
National Citizenry in Late Qing China, 1895-1911
HONG-YU GONG 36

The Neglected Administrative Foundations of Pakistan's Constitutional Democracy
ILHAN NIAZ 52

Writing Spirituality in the Works of Can Xue: Transforming the Self
ROSEMARY HADDON 68

Review article

Muslims in New Zealand: 'An integral part of the nation'? A review of
Erich Kolig, *New Zealand's Muslims and Multiculturalism*
CHRISTOPHER J. VAN DER KROGT 82

Book reviews edited by Duncan Campbell

Robert Cribb, *Digital Atlas of Indonesian History*.
ANTHONY L SMITH 90

Mary Farquhar and Yingjin Zhang, eds., *Chinese Film Stars*.
PAUL CLARK 91

Laurel Kendall, ed., *Consuming Korean Tradition in Early and Late Modernity: Commodification, Tourism and Performance*.
CEDARBOUGH T SAEJI 93

Elizabeth Dorn Lublin, *Reforming Japan: The Women's Christian Temperance Union in the Meiji Period*.
VANESSA B WARD 96

Andreas Marks and Sonya Rhie Quintanilla, eds., *Dreams and Diversions: Essays on Japanese Woodblock Prints from the San Diego Museum of Arts.*
DAVID BELL 99

Ōki Yasushi and Paolo Santangelo, *Shan'ge, the 'Mountain Songs: Love Songs in Ming China.*
DUNCAN M CAMPBELL 101

M. Cody Poulton, *A Beggar's Art: Scritping Modernity in Japanese Drama, 1900-1930.*
MARK GIBEAU 104

Jennifer S. Prough, *Straight from the Heart: Gender, Intimacy, and the Cultural Production of Shōjo Manga.*
DAVID BELL 106

Stella R. Quah, *Families in Asia: Home and Kin.*
GEOFF WATSON 107

Ronit Ricci, *Islam Translated: Literature, Conversion, and the Arabic Cosmopolis of South and Southeast Asia.*
ANTHONY REID 108

Janette Ryan, ed., *China's Higher Education Reform and Internationalization.*
LIMIN BAI 113

Shao Dan, *Remote Homeland, Recovered Borderland: Manchus, Manchoukuo and Manchuria, 1907-1985.*
DAVID BROPHY 115

Jing Tsu and David Der-wei Wang, ed., *Global Chinese Literature: Critical Essays.*
ZHENGDAO YE 118

Michael Wesley, *There goes the neighbourhood: Australia and the Rise of Asia.*
ANDREW BUTCHER 122

New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies 13, 2 (December 2011): 36-51

TO SING FOR THE NATION: JAPAN, SCHOOL SONG AND THE FORGING OF A NEW NATIONAL CITIZENRY IN LATE QING CHINA, 1895-1911

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In late 1910 when the seventeen-year-old Mao Zedong enrolled in a new-style school in Hunan, he was introduced not only to the "new knowledge" of the West but also to songs brought back from Japan by his music teacher. One of the songs that left an indelible impression on Mao's memory was "a hymn of triumph to the Japanese victory over the Russians in the war of 1904-5". "Japan's defeat of a Westernised power like Russia," writes Jonathan D. Spence, "enchanted the students, who saw the possibility for a regeneration of their own country in the example of Japan's astonishingly swift race to modernization through industrialization and constitutional reform" (Spence 2000, 9).

Chinese nationalism has been a subject of much discussion among academics and the general public in both China and the West. Through studying a host of newly-created symbols, such as the national anthem, China historians have drawn attention to the importance of music to China's nation/state-building project (Ye and Eccles 2007; Chow 2005, 53-104; Chi 2007). Similarly, by focusing on the "Sonic Dimensions of Chinese Nationalism" (Tuohy 2001) ethnomusicologists and music historians have also highlighted the interconnectedness between music and the rise of nationalism in modern China. In fact, the close connection between music and Chinese nationalism was such that "Modern Chinese songs," as one musicologist asserts, "are the product of both westernisation and anti-imperialist nationalism" (Zheng 1997, 92). One music educator even goes so far as to declare: "The development of music and music education in modern China through the entire twentieth century was predominantly governed by the development of the nation in that same period" (Lau 2005, 33).

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1 This paper was first presented as part of the panel "Sonic Nationalism and Collective Memory in China" at the 2010 AAS Annual Meeting in Philadelphia. I thank my co-panellists – Joshua Howard and Sue Tuohy – for their stimulating papers. Special thanks go to panel discussant Fred Lau for his written comments. Subsequent versions of that paper were presented at Hong Kong University's "Constructing China's Nationhood: Music and Transmission East Asia" International Conference (23-25 April 2010) and the 19th New Zealand Asian Studies Society International Conference (Massey University, Palmerston North, 2- 4 July 2011). Thanks are due to Paul Clark, David Cooke, David Young, Yiu-wa Yu and the anonymous referees at the *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies* for their helpful comments, and to the Committee for Research Funds of the Faculty of Social and Health Sciences at Unitec for supporting the research on which it is based.

To be sure, there is nothing new about music being used to serve social, ethical, moral political and ideological goals (Attali 1992; Perris 1985). Music as a means of political governance, edification, and personal cultivation has occupied an important place in Chinese cultural life from the earliest recorded times (Kaufmann 1976). But in studying the specific link between music and Chinese nationalism, most scholars to date have tended to focus on music and socio-political change in the 1920-40s (Judd 1983; Holm 1991; Hung 1996). The crucial role of nationalistic songs in awakening a national consciousness among the Chinese in the last decades of the Qing remains largely unexplored. In what follows, I shall be looking at just one strand of the animated discourse about music's relevance to China's nation-building project — the promotion of *xuetang yuege* 學堂樂歌 (school songs).[2] Through investigating why, when, where, and how Chinese reformers, broadly defined, and revolutionaries became active advocates of this new form of Western music, albeit mediated through Japan, I seek to explain not only how ideas about the use of music as a tool to shape public attitudes and behaviour at the turn of the twentieth century played a crucial role in the rise of nationalism in China but also how the introduction of the school songs had helped lay the foundation for the future politicizing of music — a key feature that characterised much of the Communists' and Nationalists' attitude toward music (Wong 1984; Holm 1991; Judd 1983; Hung 1996; Lin Yuan 2009). By focusing on the reasons behind Chinese promotion of the *xuetang yuege* at the turn of the twentieth century, the purpose of this essay is not to reduce the complexity of Chinese experience with music and nationalism, but rather to bring out the most pervasive voice within the cacophony of demands on music.

***Xuetang Yuege,* Japan, and China's Reform in Education**

In the literary and musical lexicons of twentieth century China, the phrase *xuetang yuege* is what Raymond Williams would call a "keyword" (1988). The compound term "*xuetang*" 學堂 (school) is a relatively new one, gaining wider currency only in the mid nineteenth century when Christian mission schools and the earliest modern government schools, as part of China's self-strengthening reforms, began to emerge (Micic 1999, 23). Never used in the nineteenth or early twentieth century, the phrase *xuetang yuege*, meaning "Song in School", is even a newer one and was not coined

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2 There has been no shortage of studies on the history and political significance of modern school songs in China. See Han Guohuang 1981; Zhang Jingwei 1987; Yuen, 1988; Liang 1994; Micic 1999; Qian Renkang 2001; Gong 2006. While the majority of these aim at a cultural and musicological survey of change and development in the history of modern China, the present paper differs from previous studies by focusing on the beliefs and rationales behind the promotion of this musical genre at a particular historical moment. Isabel Wong in her pioneering and insightful study has traced the origins and development of the "songs for the masses" from their inception in the mid nineteenth century to the late 1970s. But her study was through the prism of a musicologist and her focus is on the creation, dessemination and musical characteristics of the songs. See Wong 1984. In a recent study, Wai-chung Ho has explored the social-political relations between music and nationalism. But her "main aim is to explore how socio-political circumstances have mediated between musical communication and national identity in twentieth-century China" (Ho 2006, 437).

until the 1950s when the study of twentieth-century Chinese music became a legitimate subject of scholarly pursuit (Sun Ji'nan 2010, 13). In the last three decades, however, it has become so dominant that it has become a keyword in socio-political, cultural and musicological discussions of China's new musical traditions. By combining the words "*xuetang*", as opposed to the old-style private academies (*shuyuan* 書院 or *sishu* 私塾), and "*yuege*" 樂歌 (music/song), rather than the more generic "*yinyue*" 音樂 (music), the term betrays an inextricable link with the 1898 Reform Movement and the modernizing efforts of the Qing court in the wake of the Boxer uprising.

Specific in terms of musical style, "y*uege*" denotes the hybrid type of group singing that was based primarily on European and Japanese models. It was sung in unison with no harmony. Two of the most salient features of the *xuetang yuege* were its extensive use of simple foreign tunes (including Protestant hymns, foreign national anthems, English, German and French folk songs, and African American Jubilee airs) and Chinese folk melodies to fit new verses, and its direct borrowing from Japan. In the early 1900s, when this new genre was being introduced, song anthologies, which were invariably compiled or translated by reformers and returned students from Japan, played a critical role in defining and disseminating the values of nationalism by providing large numbers of new-style school students with didactic, patriotic songs. As an imported genre, this type of song appealed to the Chinese nation-builders not because of their aestheticism but rather due to their adaptability to a variety of themes and circumstances. Although inseparable from reforms in the educational sector, the singing of these songs was neither confined to the modern school compounds nor new, since Western missionaries had introduced it during the nineteenth century (Micic 1999, 33-34; Gong 2006, 29-187). But before the turn of the twentieth century, Chinese elite had taken little notice of this form. It was only after China's defeat in the first Sino-Japanese War that Chinese reformers and Chinese overseas students in Japan began to promote its use in China's nationalist cause.

The spread of the school song in fin-de-siècle China cannot be fully understood without reference to China's close relations with Japan at the time and the educational reforms launched by the Qing court in the wake of the Boxer uprising. Japan, among other things, not only alerted Chinese nation-builders to music as a tool for promoting values deemed important to the nation but also showed them how songs could be used as an emotional force to awaken a national consciousness among the masses and to teach them the principles of nationalism. The most salient feature of the school-song phenomenon was its direct borrowing of the Japanese "*shōka*" 唱歌— a singing tradition formed after the Meiji Reformation (Zhang Qian 1996).

The rise of the school song movement was also intertwined with the Qing government's educational reform modelled on the Japanese school system. The value of singing songs in China's nation-building project was first acknowledged in the set of regulations for the new school system issued in January 1904. In March 1907, the Qing Board of Education decreed the inclusion of music as an "optional subject" in primary schools for girls and as a "compulsory subject" in normal schools for girls. Two years later, the court approved the request of the Board to include singing as part of the secondary school curriculum (Sun Ji'nan 2000, 28-29; Gong, 288-312).

The Chinese Discovery of School Songs in Japan

The earliest Chinese accounts of modern school-song singing in Japan are found in the late 1870s when China began to send diplomatic representatives to Tokyo. The diplomat-poet-reformer Huang Zunxian 黄遵憲 (1848-1905) was the first to provide such an account. In his *Poems on Miscellaneous Topics on Japan* (*Riben zashi shi* 日本雜事詩, 1879), Huang noted that "singing" (*changge* 唱歌) was one of the subjects taught at Japanese kindergartens for the purpose of "developing children's intelligence and invigorating their energies" (Wang Pu 1997, 59). Later in his widely circulated *Treatises on Japan* (*Riben guozhi* 日本國志, 1880-1887), Huang mentioned again that singing was not only a compulsory subject in the Japanese elementary and middle school curriculum but also a regular subject in Japanese schools for girls (Wu Yongyi 1996, 347). As a man nurtured in the Confucian tradition of statecraft, Huang was clearly not interested in Japanese songs as a form of pure aesthetic enjoyment. Thus it came as no surprise that his descriptions of Japanese school-songs were couched in terms of their extrinsic usefulness in the formation of an enlightened, sensitive citizenry.

Although Huang's was not the only one in the initial stage of Sino-Japanese interaction, similar accounts of school-song teaching cannot be found in any number until the late 1890s when a steady stream of Chinese visitors began to appear in Japan. Luo Zhenyu 羅振玉 (1866-1940), the archaeologist, bibliographer and editor of the influential journal *Jiaoyu shijie* 教育世界 (The World of Education), for example, made references to music education in Japan in his general account of his mission to Japan. So did Wu Rulun 吳汝倫 (1840-1903), then the vice-president for faculty and instruction of the Imperial University in Peking (Wang Pu, 60).

Reform-minded educators and enlightened gentry-scholars were not alone in providing eyewitness accounts of the way in which Japanese educational institutions used singing as a means of galvanising support for Japan's nation-building project. Imperial court officials and members of provincial government-sponsored educational tours also left records of their impressions of the Japanese practice. In a report of an educational inspection tour of Japan despatched by Zhang Zhidong 張之洞 (1837-1909) in early 1898, Yao Xiguang 姚錫光 (1856-192?), the report's author and head of the mission, noted approvingly of the inclusion of singing in Japanese schools (Wang Pu, 59). Similarly, Zhu Shou 朱綬, an official from Jiangxi, also mentioned Japanese music teaching in his *Dong you ji cheng* 東游記程 (My Journey to Japan), (Harrell 1992, 50).

Music as a regular subject in Japanese schools intrigued the Chinese visitors. For some, the apparent importance attached to music in the Japanese educational system was perplexing. "Music as a school subject does not seem to be terribly important," noted Zhu Shou, "yet it is stipulated as a compulsory subject in every primary and secondary school" (Harrell, 50). This bewilderment, however, did not seem to deter them from enquiring about the practical side of musical instruction. During a visit to the Girls Higher Normal School in Tokyo in 1903, Miao Quansun 繆荃孫 (1844-1919), the well-known bibliographic scholar and founder of a number of excellent libraries, noted down not only details like the use of staff notation but also the ways in which music classes were conducted in the kindergarten attached to the school and the

contents of the musical programmes there ([1903] 1996, 88). Xiang Wenrui 項文瑞, who had a prolonged stay in Japan in 1902, was so impressed by the actual practice of Japanese music teaching that, besides writing down the details of the singing lessons he had observed on his visits to various Japanese schools, he also recorded the types of Western instruments used, titles of the songs sung and the exact number of black and white keys on an organ. He even went so far as to ask: "Suppose I were to learn how to compose our own national songs (*guoge* 國歌), would I be able to do so if I study the harmonium for three months?" ([1902] 1996, 86).

Liang Qichao, Military Song and the Forging of the New Citizenry

Chinese visitors to Japan during the late 1890s and early 1900s were particularly impressed by the extent to which Western martial music was used in Japanese schools, army and navy academies, and public rallies, as well as in farewell and death rituals. The late Qing reformer, Shen Yiqing 沈翊清 (1858-1918), who headed a twenty-five strong delegation to Japan in 1899 to gain firsthand knowledge of Japan's political, military and educational systems, was so amazed with the omnipresence of Western military music in Japan's education sector that he left a meticulous account of the size, organisational structure and the types of instruments used in the military band he had encountered at a Japanese school ([1900] 1996, 85). During his visit to the Dōbun Gakkō in late 1905, the high-ranking Qing official Dai Hongci 戴鴻慈 (1853-1910) commended the teaching of military music there, pointing out specifically the power of military songs in arousing in one's heart a profound sense of heroism ([1905] 1982, 53-54).

Among leading reformers who advocated the use of militaristic songs as a tool for inculcating a new ethic of martial-spiritedness and nationalism, no one was more vigorous than the prominent radical intellectual Liang Qichao 梁啟超 (1873-1929). In the first years of the twentieth century, Liang, inspired in part by his experiences in Japan, published a number of articles exalting the values of militarism. With a zest unmatched by any others of his generation, he argued passionately for the efficacy of military songs as an instrument of militarist agitation and nation building (Xia Xiaohong 2000, 85).

Liang's enthusiasm for martial music is most evident in his exuberant promotion of the martial poems by his friend Huang Zunxian. "Deliriously happy" upon reading Huang's "Four Marching Songs," he claimed in 1902 that Huang's marches "have reached a new high point" in terms of "Poetic Revolution" and asserted that "anyone who can read these poems without dancing is not a real man!" ([1902-4] 1959, 43, trans., Schmidt 1994, 56).

To be sure, Liang had always admired Huang's effort to use his literary talent to promote Chinese nationalism (Zhang Pengyuan 1969), but it is very telling that, of Huang's voluminous literary works, Liang would find such inspiration in the military marches. As an architect of the 1898 Reform, Huang composed these marches for the express purpose of stirring up a martial spirit and patriotic sentiment among Chinese soldiers and ordinary citizens (Kamachi 1981, 253). In addition to the overwhelming

tenor of ardent nationalism, of devotion to the cause of strengthening China, most of Huang's songs had refrains with such soul-stirring words as "Fight! Fight! Fight!," "Win! Win! Win!," "Forward! Forward! Forward!," or "Brave! Brave! Brave!" These songs appealed to Liang not because of their sophisticated aesthetic sense or superb literary subtlety, but rather due to their combative tone and passion-stirring effects.

Liang's passion for militaristic marching songs was a result of his search for a vehicle for great nationalistic appeal. For years he had been concerned with the lack of indignation felt by his countrymen against the foreign encroachment on China's sovereignty. Attributing this submissiveness to a Chinese aversion to militarism and a lack of fighting spirit among the Chinese people, he blamed Chinese music for being one of the factors that had contributed to this passivity. In his diagnosis, the lack of military songs was "not only a defect in our fatherland's literature but is also closely related to the decline in our national fortunes" (42-43, Schmidt, 56). Liang argued that a militant spirit needed to be aroused in the Chinese populace in order to forge a "new people". To achieve this, he suggested, "military songs," along with poetry, fiction, drama and other arts, should be used. In late 1903 he even went as far as to state: "If we want to transform the character of our national citizens, the teaching of poetry and music must be regarded as one of the most important means of spiritual education" (58), a view that paralleled much older Confucian views about character transformation (Huang 1962; DeWoskin 1982, 29; Owen 1992, 40).

The Promotion of Militaristic Patriotic Songs by Chinese Overseas Students in Japan

Starting from the early 1900s, an increasing number of radical Chinese students in Japan became actively involved in promoting songs of the marching type. Among them, the first to call attention to the crucial importance of singing patriotic songs in China's rejuvenation was the future military commander, Cai E 蔡鍔 (1882-1916). Like his mentor, Liang Qichao, Cai E viewed singing primarily as a tool to promote militarism and national solidarity. In his essay "On the Martial Citizen", serialised in Liang's *New People's Miscellany*, Cai E blamed China's weak position in the world on its lack of a martial spirit and advocated the use of military songs as a tool to carry out military and patriotic education. Citing Japan's success in using militaristic songs to instil a martial spirit in her people, he wrote:

> Ever since the Meiji Reformation, Japan has been emulating the West in every way. As a result, singing is now included in the school curriculum as a subject of study. Although school songs are not military songs and school music not military music, they nonetheless contain ideas of patriotism and exalt the martial spirit. On hearing such songs a nationalist spirit is aroused even without one's being conscious of it. (Feng Hesheng [1902] 1984, 26).

That Cai E should have appealed to a military purpose for musical study is not surprising, given his reformist background and the context of the times in which he was speaking and writing. But he was by no means alone in stressing the value of

military music in inculcating a martial spirit among the Chinese populace. Calls like his were pervasive at the turn of the twentieth century when radical Chinese students in Japan began to idealize the military calling above other pursuits and write about the necessity of training a martial-spirited citizenry (Fung 1980, 62-133). For example, the pseudonymous Fei Shi 匪石 also stressed the value of military music in the service of the nation, but he drew attention to the usefulness of other genres of Western music, rather than military songs and brass bands alone, in the forging of an enlightened, active and public-spirited citizenry (*guomin* 國民). "If used properly," he asserted, "Western music can often promote progressive ideas among the citizenry and therefore can be conducive to the formation of a unified national will" (1903, 8). Harking back to the famous essence vs. application (*ti* - *yong* 體-用) formula, Fei Shi justified his wholehearted embrace of Western music in terms of its ability to serve the need of the nation. Unlike Cai E, whose realisation of the importance of military music did not seem to lead him to any concrete action, Fei Shi was enough of a realist to know that a precondition for his dream of developing a brand new musical culture was an elaborate and well-organised system of musical education. Given his radical background and nation-building priorities, it is no coincidence that the system he had envisioned was characterised by its mass-orientation and its emphasis on military education (Fei Shi, 4 and 9).

The radical students' most representative views on the power of militaristic patriotic songs were perhaps best summed up in a 1905 article written by Li Xieyi 李燮義 (1875-1926). A Japan-trained music student and an active participant in the 1911 Revolution (Hou Ruiyun and Zhang Jingwei 1986), Li took pains to point out that the most important function of music was its public utility, arguing that China at this time of national crisis needed a new type of songs. As a tool for inculcating a new ethic of militarism and nationalism, these songs, he emphasized, would have to be able to arouse a new morale of self-respect in school students and be accessible to a large segment of the Chinese people at the same time. By way of illustration, he recommended "Hail Columbia," "La Marseillaise," and "Song of Prussia" as good examples to emulate (Jian Hong [1906] 1996, 221). In his own composition, Li made use of the Western diatonic major scales, simple rhythmic patterns and a narrow vocal range. Reflecting his primary objectives of saving the nation and combating the Chinese aversion to militarism, the lyrics of his songs were often characterized by such belligerent lines as "gulping down the blood of our enemy and proudly singing the song of triumph" (Da Wei 1982, 107).

Not wanting to be under the shadows of their male compatriots, female Chinese students in Japan also wrote lyrics to exhort militarism for the sake of the nation. An oft-cited example is the revolutionary martyr and feminist fighter Qiu Jin 秋瑾 (1875-1907). Touched by the Japanese cult of military heroes and cognisant of the power of military songs in encouraging a fighting spirit in her people (Xia Xionghong, 82), she published songs bearing such nationalist titles as "Female National Citizens" and "Women Soldiers" shortly before her execution at the hands of the Qing officials. In them she invoked ancient Chinese women warriors like the legendary Hua Mulan 花木兰 and Liang Hongyu 梁红玉 and urged her fellow women compatriots to take up arms to fight for the nation. During her brief time as a teacher at the Datong Normal School she also used songs to promote her brand of anti-Manchu nationalism (Da Wei 1982, 107-108).

Patriotic Songs and the Forging of a Public-Spirited Citizenry

The Chinese enthusiasm for military and nationalistic songs was also closely linked to the aspirations of the 1911 revolutionary movement in which preparing citizens for a republic was a central goal. Japan's Meiji Reform had demonstrated that a modern nation state could only work effectively when a coherent public spirit is built and the citizens are enlightened, orderly, disciplined and engaged. Simple and accessible patriotic songs were one of the key means to train such a citizenry. Among proponents of the school song, the educationalist, politician and onetime head of the School Textbook Department of the Shanghai Commercial Press, Jiang Weiqiao 蔣維喬 (1873-1958), stands out as the most unwavering in his faith in the use of music to achieve such goals. At a large public gathering at Changzhou in 1904, for example, he made his conviction abundantly clear by declaring that "in terms of elevating the morals and renovating the customs of the Chinese people, there is no better means than music" (Zhu Zhuang [1904] 1996, 214).

Tang Hualong 湯化龍 (1874-1918), a constitutional reformer, co-founder of the Progressive Party and, later, an elected speaker of the National Assembly, was among many who concurred with Jiang in his emphasis on the efficacy of music in shaping a national character and strengthening the intellectual and moral fibre of the nation. So convinced was he of the power of nationalistic patriotic songs in "moulding a public-spirited, duty-conscious, and cooperative citizenry" that he called for an immediate introduction of singing to all Chinese schools ([1906] 1996, 152).

Although discussions of modern school songs were predominantly linked to the themes of strengthening the nation and militarising its citizens, not all leading Chinese nation-builders were prepared to confine their thinking to such a narrow interpretation. While reformers, radical students and revolutionaries justified their enthusiasm on the basis of militarism and patriotism, spokesmen for the advancement of modern education promoted musical instruction on a more broadly defined humanistic ground. To them, singing school songs was not simply a way of carrying out militaristic or nationalist indoctrination but a broad educational activity that would influence mind and heart, and help shape character. By highlighting the efficacy of songs as a means to cultivate a morally-upright and public-spirited citizenry they showed that their concerns were not just with patriotism, self-discipline, and military readiness but also with civic spiritedness. In their view, singing, apart from helping to create a sense of solidarity and togetherness and hence bring people of diverse backgrounds together, was also an important means of ethical edification, personal cultivation, and political governance.

Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培 (1868-1940), arguably the first leading Chinese social and political reformer to advocate the inclusion of singing in modern schools, serves as a prime example of such thinking. While by no means averse to songs being used as a tool for collective will and nationalist agitation, he saw the true significance of music as residing in "aesthetic education" (*meiyu* 美育) (Cai 1988a, 1988b; Duiker 1972). It was for this reason that he first proposed the inclusion of music in women's education in 1901 (Cai 1988c). A year later, when he and other members of the Educational Society founded the Patriotic Women's School (Aiguo nüxue 愛國女學) in Shanghai,

he wasted no time in insisting that singing should be a compulsory component of its core curriculum (Wang Pu, 64-65).

Wang Guowei 王國維 (1877-1927), perhaps the first to provide a systematic exposition of the concept of aesthetics education to the Chinese reading public (Bonner 1986, 98), placed an even greater emphasis on the aesthetic dimension of music. At once delighted by, and concerned with, the phenomenal popularity of school songs, he viewed the practice of school-song singing through the prism of wide-ranging and far-reaching humanistic goals. Under the influence of Kant and Schopenhauer, Wang responded with alarm to this pervasive concern with music's usefulness to serve society by influencing morals and swaying the heart. In 1907, the very year when the Board of Education decreed the mandatory inclusion of singing in normal schools for girls, he was compelled to write about the need to focus on the aesthetic value of school songs and be critical of what was being taught in the school-song courses. Although he did not go so far as to advocate art for art's sake, he nevertheless expressed his particular concern with the subservient status of music in relation to moral education. He even went as far as to suggest that singing classes in China's modern schools had become "a virtue slave of ethics classes" ([1907] 2000, 101).

Chinese reformers and educators believed that singing, apart from affording moral, aesthetical, and physical advantages to children, was also conducive to the enrichment of a person's overall knowledge and therefore had an important part to play in the fostering of a knowledgeable citizenry. Hou Hongjian 侯鸿鑑 (1872-1961), a noted educator and a frequent contributor to *Jiaoyu zazhi* 教育雜誌 (The Educational Review), was deeply intrigued by the usefulness of music in "stimulating a child's interest [in learning] and in cultivating his/her temperament" (Bao San 1904, 121). He was particularly eager to highlight the value of singing in developing a child's physical constitution, emotional well-being, and intellectual faculties. Concerned that the emphasis on physical strength and military education had resulted in a general neglect of music in Chinese schools, Hou drew attention to the function of music in what he regarded as a balanced education for children, insisting "Physical education must be balanced by musical study" (Bao San, 121). Promoting singing as a means to relieve restlessness and fatigue as well as improve classroom discipline, he even argued that songs could serve as a useful tool to integrate other aspects of the curriculum:

> If singing can be introduced as part of the school curriculum, what students learn from other school subjects like history, geography, ethics, science and callisthenics can all be incorporated into it. By singing [what they have learned], not only can old lessons be revised but new knowledge can also be gained (Bao San, 121).

As if anticipating criticisms that he should give priority to singing instead of other more practical branches of learning in his educational proposal, Li Baoxun 李宝巽, superintendent of Chinese students in Japan, explained: "Although music is not the most pressing matter of the moment, it is a way of cultivating talent and laying a foundation for learning. The studies of politics, law, economics, military affairs, and

other practical subjects are indeed bases of education but the spirit of education is none other than music" ([1905] 1996, 146-47).

Psychological and pedagogical benefits aside, many Chinese reformers and overseas students in Japan were also convinced of the social significance of music, believing that the singing of school songs would help instil values of sociability, teamwork, competition, and self-presentation. Ultimately, they maintained, music was to play a crucial role in creating a culturally unified and cohesive nation-state.

Singing, particularly singing in unison, could also offer ways to explore new kinds of behaviour, manage human differences, forge a common bond and embody the public spirit. The act of music making, because it was commonly undertaken in group settings, could also provide opportunities for individual students to interact with others in the contexts of performing, and listening to music, and thus ensure the forging of a strong community spirit:

> Students in the same class singing the same song not only can advance musical study but can harmonise their actions as well. Unity in their voice and action can promote a sense of togetherness and a community spirit. If properly directed, singing school songs either individually or as a group can also encourage students to strive for excellence and inspire in their hearts a sense of pride (Bao San 1904, 121).

The emphasis on the extrinsic values of music was such that Chinese reformers and revolutionaries often exaggerated the social and humanistic functions of singing to the extent that music was idealised as a kind of panacea for dealing with all moral and pedagogical matters. The following assertion by Huang Zisheng 黄子绳, a reformer-turned educator and compiler of educational songbooks, was one typical example:

> Is there one thing that has the indescribable power of at once cultivating one's morality, improving social mores, moderating an individual's temperament and perfecting one's personality? Yes, there is, that is, music ([1905] 1996, 147-9).

Organisation of Song Societies and the Proliferation of School-Song Books

The belief that school-songs offered a powerful means to influence mind and heart, train citizens, build a public spirit, and boost nationalist sentiments prompted Chinese reformers and radical students in Japan to explore ways to create and spread such songs through the organisation of societies and publication of journals. This is best exemplified by the cases of Shen Xingong 沈心工 (1870-1947) and Zeng Zhimin 曾志忞 (1879 -1929), two of the most prominent promoters of the *xuetang yuege*.

In November 1902, Shen Xingong was the first to form the Society for the Teaching and Practice of Music (Yinyue Jiangxi hui 音樂講習會) in Tokyo and Suzuki Komejiro 鈴木米次郎 (1868-1940), a prominent music educator and teacher of the Tokyo Higher Normal School, was one of the Japanese teachers who taught Shen and

his fellow enthusiasts rudiments of Western music theory and techniques of school-song writing. After returning to China in February 1903, Shen began to teach *yuege* at the Nanyang Primary School in Shanghai. Not content to teach students alone, he and another Japanese-trained music educator, Gao Yanyun 高硯雲, founded a musical society in Shanghai early in 1904 to promote the benefits of school-song singing to a wider audience. Encouraged by the warm response to their effort, Shen subsequently offered similar singing classes for like-minded educators and social reformers, including members of the Shanghai Study Society (Hu Xuehui 滬學會). In autumn that same year, he also organised the Society for the Teaching and Practice of School Songs (Yuege Jiangxihui 樂歌講習會) at the Shanghai Wuben Women's Academy (Wuben nüshu 務本女塾). Among the forty to fifty adult participants of Shen's Society were such leading educators as Xia Songlai 夏頌莱, Wang Yincai 王引才and Wu Xin 吴馨 (Shen Qia 1983, 59). It was largely due to Shen's efforts that singing school songs went beyond the confines of modern schools and became a widespread social phenomenon that pervaded all strata of Chinese society (Shen Qia 1990).

While Shen and his cohorts were busy teaching school songs in Shanghai, Chinese students in Japan were also engaged in learning how to create nationalistic songs. Zeng Zhimin and Zhu Shaoping 朱少屏 (1882-1942) were among the first to express their wish to form a Society for National Music (Guomin yinyuehui 國民音樂會) (Zhang Jingwei 1996, 125). In May 1904, Zeng formed the Society for Elegant Asian Music (Yaya Yinyue Hui 亚雅音樂會) in Tokyo with an avowed aim of "promoting school and social music and encouraging the national spirit" (Anon. [1904] 1996, 119). In the following years, Zeng devoted much of his energy to popularising school songs in China, publishing such articles as "Singing and Methods of Teaching Songs," "Basic Steps in Music Teaching," "How to Compose Simple Marches." In addition, he also translated a number of pertinent Japanese textbooks into Chinese (Gong, 353-57). He even took the drastic step of formally enrolling himself in the Tokyo School of Music, an act much praised by Liang Qichao (Liang Qichao [1902] 1959, 77).

Just as the earlier Chinese enthusiasm for military songs resulted in a wide circulation of Japanese army and naval songs in China (Shi Lei 1983), the fervour for didactic, nationalistic songs also produced tangible results. Shen Xingong, Zeng Zhimin and Li Shutong 李叔同 (1880 -1942) were among the first to compile and publish school-song anthologies. Coinciding with the Qing court's effort to reform the educational system (Gong, 296-99), their anthologies met with tremendous success. For example, the first volume of Shen's *Anthology of School Songs* series (*Xuexiao changge ji* 學校唱歌集), published between 1904 and 1907, was so well received that within one year it had to be reprinted five times (Chen Maozhi [1905] 1996, 155). Being the first produced in China by a Chinese, the series also provided prototypes for many other song textbooks of the late Qing and early Republican periods (Qian Renkang, 1-3; Zhang Jingwei 1987, 119). Encouraged by Shen's phenomenal success, other leading educators such as Zhao Mingchuan 趙铭傳 (1868-1940), Hua Zhen 華振 (1883-1966), Ye Zhongleng 叶中冷 (1880-1933), Xin Han 辛漢, and Hu Junfu 胡君复, all of whom were trained in Japan, also became involved in compiling song anthologies, giving rise to a great publishing carnival of songbooks that ran from 1904

to the mid 1920s (Qian Renkang, 3). Something of the craze for school songs can be seen in the fact that in the year 1904 alone, nearly eighty school songs were published in Chinese newspapers and periodicals (Zhang Jingwei 1983, 118). In less than twenty years, from 1903 to the eve of the May Fourth movement in 1919, more than forty music textbooks were published and some 1300 school songs appeared in various Chinese publications (Wu Yongyi, 133).

The proliferation of school-song books played an important role in promoting various forms of nationalism. A good indicator is the large number of songs bearing the title "Love One's Country" and calling for resisting imperialist aggression, saving the nation and reforming society. Songs such as "The History of the Han People", "Expelling the Manchu", "Chinese Men", and "Song of the History and Geography of the Eighteen Provinces", "Magnificent China" and so on not only exalted the political ideology of racial nationalism but also equated the love of the Han ethnicity with the love of China by advocating the expulsion of the Manchu. Others like "Motherland", "Awakening the National Citizenry", "When Will [You] Awake", "The Yellow River", and "The Yangzi River" served as a didactic tool to define the national identity, exalt values of cultural nationalism and "teach people what a 'nation' consists of – its territory, people, and principles – and their role within it" (Tuohy, 112-13).

Conclusion

Through an analysis of when, where, why, and how Chinese reformers and overseas students in Japan became advocates of the school song, the paper has sought to highlight the interconnection between a broad nationalist discourse and the political instrumentalisation of music in the twilight years of the Qing. As the examination of the early Chinese accounts of modern school-song singing in Japanese schools makes clear, the Chinese interest in this form of Western-derived music had little to do with the artistic or intrinsic beauty of music *per se*. From the very beginning, the Chinese interest, far from subscribing to the notion of music having a superior utility in and of itself, was conditioned by its utilitarian motives. Besides being a sharp motivational tool, school songs also provided a potent pedagogical mechanism for Chinese proponents of nationalism to help the masses conceptualise and internalise a new national identity for themselves and their nation.

The above discussion of the connection between modern school songs and the rise of Chinese nationalism has also highlighted the crucial role of Japan in China's search for nationhood. In their search for an effective tool to reinvigorate the national spirit, Chinese reformers and radical revolutionaries turned to Japan, rather than the West, for inspiration. By serving as China's model during the years of 1895 and 1911, Japan not only alerted the Chinese reformers and revolutionaries to the efficacy of music as a vehicle of political and social reform but, more importantly, also showed them how to use singing to awaken a national consciousness among the masses. Taking their cues from the Japanese experience, radical Chinese students in Japan actively appropriated school songs to serve the needs of the nation, thus fulfilling their broad social and political ambitions through music.

To be sure, music as a tool for social change, personal cultivation, and political governance has always featured prominently in China's long history. Yet, compared to earlier Chinese diplomats, education officials, and visitors to Japan, late Qing reformers and the Chinese students in Japan were more explicit in their utilitarian promotion of music in China. This is because their efforts were more directly tied to China's nationalist struggle of the early twentieth century. Their general emphasis on the social and political values of music fitted in well with the government initiative to modernise and the society's general mood for change. As a result, their influence was much more widespread and far-reaching.

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